881 the chief must not be used by him to buy a wife. This would pollute the village (makhuma). It would cause unfortunate births (timbeleko) and ruin the life of the people.

The chameleon procession is performed in the villages of the main headmen of the tribe during the few following days till, at last, the ochre of the initiated is removed and they return home definitely.

SOME REMARKS ON THE CIRCUMCISION SCHOOL

177 881 741 822 881 The square form of the sungi sheds, so different from the circular form adopted by the Bantus for their homes and implements, might be the trace of a Semitic influence. But, on the whole, all these rites are closely connected together and their sequence is quite easy to understand.

The Ngoma is truly a puberty rite, but not a sexual initiation. The suspension of conjugal relations, and the prevalence of licentious language might give the idea that it is in direct relation with the sexual life. But these two phenomena are met with on other occasions, as we shall see, and seem to be characteristic occurrences in most of the marginal periods. Moreover boys of ten and twelve and men of twenty-five or more can occasionally be admitted to the sungi, and this proves that the school has nothing to do with marriage, properly speaking. Neither is the Ngoma a pure act of aggregation to a definite clan. Boys of one clan often go to the sungi of another chief to be initiated; they do not become his subjects by so doing. Even Thongas sometimes enter into Sutho lodges and Ma-Lemba have a special place in them. It is true that the Ngoma is the business of the chief. Only those who are really chiefs have the right to build a lodge. But though the initiated are exhorted to become good subjects of their chief, the intention of the circumcision school is rather to introduce the little boy *into manhood*, to cleanse him from the *bukhuna* (p. 58) to make him a thoughtful adult member of the community.

(See practical conclusion on Circumcision Rites at the end of Vol. I.)

II. *Other Puberty Rites.*

881 178 The Ngoma has disappeared in most of the Thonga clans, but there are a few other puberty rites which have been preserved all through the tribe.

The dawn is called ndundju; then comes thabela zana, the 805
time when the rays of the sun (sana) are piercing ; *hisa ka sana*, 821
when they are burning ; *nhlekanhi*, the middle of the sky, or *shitakataka*, the maximum point of the heat ; then *ndjenga* (Dj.), or *lihungu* (Ro.), the afternoon, the time when the sun goes down (renga) ; *ku pela* or *ku hlwa*, when it reaches the horizon, and *mpimabayeni* (Dj.) the twilight, literally "the time when you do not easily recognize strangers coming to your village because it grows dark." These are the divisions of the day (siku). Then comes the night (busiku).

Eclipses do not seem to have ever much impressed the 821
imagination of the Thongas. At any rate, they never caused panics (Mboza). When, warned that an eclipse will take place, they see that, indeed, the sun or moon is "turning dark" (dji yentsha ntima). Natives are more struck with wonder at the supernatural knowledge of the White people, than with fear of the phenomenon itself.

I have already dealt with the notion of the *year*, (lembe, dji-ma), 805
which is very vague ; it begins at two different periods : that of 821
tilling and that of harvesting the first fruits (I, p. 396, II, p. 20). Thongas do not make any difference between a solar and a lunar year, their knowledge of months being very imperfect, as we shall shortly see.

Before leaving the source of light, I may add that the *light* 821
itself is called *ku bonekisa* (Ro.), or *ku bonakala* (Dj.), litt., that 822
which makes to appear. Of course Natives have no explanation to give of it. Moonlight is called by another name, viz. *nweti*, connected with hweti, moon. *Colours* are very imperfectly perceived, at least if we are to base our judgment on the vocabulary. *Ntima* means both black and dark blue. *Libungu* is carmine, red, purple, and also yellow. Yellow is not perceived as a distinct colour. *Psuka* is the tinge of dawn, and of the rising sun. *Nkushe*, which means sea-weed, is applied to the *blue* sky ; *nkwalala* is grey, *lihlaza* (Ro.) is green, the green of grass in the spring, and the [231]
corresponding term in Djonga is *rilambyana*, that which makes dogs howl. Very green grass has this effect on Native dogs.

The *moon* (ñhweti (Dj.), hweti (Ro.) cl. yi-tin), was perhaps 821
personified in former times, as it bears the feminine suffix *-eti*,

821 star is directing its course, and they have a formula of incantation
787 to get rid of the misfortune attending this phenomenon. They
789 say : "Thu! Thu! Nkulunkulu ndjuwee, famba psa ku u nga fa u ku bi." — "You great thing, go away alone (without me, leaving me behind) and die and disappear entirely." This is more an imprecation (shiruketelo) than an incantation. The syllable *thu* indicates, and accompanies, the emission of a little saliva. It is different from the sacramental *tsu*, employed to invoke the spirits of the ancestors : it is an insult. It is spitting *at* something, not an act of respect and an offering, like *tsu* (1). This is the Ronga formula ; the one used in Northern clans has the same meaning : "*Rura, rura weshe*" (Move, move alone!).

821 *Comets* greatly impress the imagination of the Thongas ;
787 they are called *shimusana*, or *nyeleti ya musana*, the star of dust, or *nyeleti ya nkila*, the star with a tail, and when they appear they also mean the death of a chief. People say : "See ! A chief has died, but they have not yet published the mourning" (I. p. 414). The star which is said to have appeared the year of the death of Manukosi was probably a comet. (See Report of the S.A.A.A.S. 1905, Vol. III, p. 232.)

772 These few superstitions and observations comprise all the Astronomy of the Thongas. The sidereal world is almost entirely outside the range of their preoccupations.

III. *Cosmographic and Meteorological Phenonomena.*

1) The Wind.

821 The wind is called *moya*, an interesting word which means
822 also spirit (the human breath and the spiritual part of man), and is applied to the acting, living agent, or to the smell, or taste, of some objects. For instance it is said of an alcoholic beverage

861 (1) They spit at a child who is causing an unpleasant smell, saying to him : "Thu! u ya tinyela matjimba." — "Go away to ease yourself." Should you do this to a
578 person older than yourself, he will say to you : "What ! you make *thu* to me (wa ndji tjhuka), you want me to ease myself !"

which has lost its strength that its "moya" has gone. It is also the moya which gives their potency to medical charms. 821 822

Another word for wind is *mheho*. Strong winds are called *shidzedze*. When they break trees and damage the mealies they are attributed to baloyi, wizards, who fight during the night, quarelling over the cobs.

One frequently hears about *timheho ta mune*, the four winds. They are called: *Ñwalungu*, the north wind, (a curious word perhaps connected with Balungu, the White men; see later on); *Nyingitimi* (Ro.), or *Djonga* (Dj.), the South wind; *Mupfanyaka*, the one coming from the plain of the black earth, the West Wind; *Mfenya*, the sea breeze, coming from the East. Sailors who are great connoisseurs in this domain distinguish further the South Westerly wind, which they call *Mfenyakulu*, the great Mfenya. In Shiluvane, the West wind, which sometimes blows with great violence, coming down from the mountains of the Transvaal Plateau, is called *Burwa*, place of habitation of the Ba-Rwa (bu, locative prefix indicating a country). (Compare I. p. 18). Two other terms of the bu-ma class, also applied to East and West in all the clans, are: *Busha*, the spot where the sun rises (ku sha), the East, and *Bupeladambu*, the spot where the sun sets, the West. So there is no doubt that the Thongas possess the idea of the four cardinal points. 821 823 132

2) Native Geography.

The geographical notions of the tribe are, on the other hand, very scanty. As a rule, they do not think it possible to know a country, or place, where they have not travelled. Every one must compile his own geography. Hunters, and men engaged in commercial journeys, had some knowledge of the Spelonken (Bvesha), of Pietermaritzburg (Umgungundhlovu), of Kimberley (Dayiman), and now practically every grown-up Thonga has been to Johannesburg (Nkamben). But those who have always remained at home, women especially, show gross ignorance regarding their own country. I met some who were totally ignorant of the fact that the Nkomati River, which leaves the 823 815

789 to be black. The heart was pierced with a puncheon and the blood flowed. He carefully washed the horns with the blood and smeared them later on (horola) with the "psanyi" found in the intestines of the animal. Then he took his *ntsiko*, viz., the two pieces of wood which served as his flint, poured a little of the powder into the notch of the female stick and made fire by the rapid friction described on p. 34. In the meantime Mankhelu prayed as follows: "Here are the drugs, Rivimbi of Tsome (Rivimbi's father)! Give us rain." Then he invoked his own gods, saying: "Go to Rivimbi for me and come along here all of you to make the rain fall." This performance is a "mhamba," a means of calling the gods, especially Rivimbi, "the master of this mhamba." After a while the wood began to burn; leaves of the "nembe-nembe" bush (Cassia petersiana) were placed on it and a black smoke rose and ascended to heaven. Then the clouds appeared and soon the thunderstorm broke. A feather of the ndlati bird of lightning was placed amongst the leaves as a protection against thunderbolts.

Mankhelu was absolutely convinced of the efficacy of this means of rain-making, and there seems to be more sense in this rite than in many others. To use the sea to cause rain to [821] fall, is not after all so absurd! I would not assert that Natives have a clear idea as to the formation of clouds, *mapapa* (Dj.), *matlabi* (Ro.), and know that the water from above comes from the water below, but at any rate they know that the sea is water and rain is [822] also water. To obtain rain by smoke rising from burning sea products is a procedure which is in keeping with one of the most common beliefs of primitive man, that like produces like, a belief which has found its expression in the famous principle of the old physicians: "Similia similibus curantur."

When practising his rain-making art at home, Mankhelu proceeded with less ceremonial pomp. After having consulted his bones, he took four leaves of the tjeke plant (p. 14), smeared them with the magical powder and exposed them to the rays of the burning sun. As soon as these leaves were fully dry, "Heaven began to roar" and the rain came.

[177] The great rain medicine is of Pedi or Venda origin. In addition